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A SHORT
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
Blessed Place and State
OF THE
Saints Above.

In a Discourse upon the Words of
our Blessed Saviour;

John xiv. 2. *In my Father's House are
many Mansions; if it were not so, I
would have told you: I go to prepare
a Place for you.*

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THE
PREFACE

IT is the privilege of Christianity, that Life and Immortality are brought to Light in the Gospel. The Heathen World sat in Darkness, was secure in Misery: As one that sleeps is pleas'd with the Scenes of Fancy; he Dreams of Treasures of Gold, of Gardens, of Feasts, and thinks the painted Appearances, the superficial

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Colours of Good to be Realities: thus whilst Reason was darkned by Sense, the World was content with pleasant Delusions. Who amongst the many pretenders to Wisdom, had a convincing knowledge of the Blessed Eternity to come? Who had a glimpse of that Happiness that results from the sight of God in Glory? This Instruction so refreshing our Spirits, darkned with Sorrows here, comes from the School of Heaven: as the Sun revives us by its
chear-

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cheerful Appearance, and affords that Light, without which it were impossible to behold it.

During the Legal Dispensation, there was a Mist upon the Future State. The notice of Eternal Things was a Twilight mixt with Shadows. The Revelation of the Heavenly Glory was reserv'd till our Saviour's appearing in the World, who purchas'd it with the dearest price, and offers it upon such gracious Terms,

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that whosoever sincerely desires and seeks, shall obtain it; and none shall be deprived of it, but for their wilful and guilty neglect. It might be expected that such a Proposal were sufficient to engage Men with all their Active Powers to secure such a precious Interest, when indeed their best Endeavours and most zealous Affections are too slight and faint, with respect to that excellent Happiness. Are not the first Notions of Things

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Things that are written in
our Brests, sufficient to con-
vince us, that what is for
ever, is to be preferr'd be-
fore what suddenly passes a-
way? Or is it necessary in
Matters of Temporal Con-
cernment, to use strong Ar-
guments to perswade us ra-
ther to chuse a Treasure
that will enrich us for our
Lives, than what will pur-
chase food only for a day?
Yet 'tis strange to amaze-
ment, that in Things of Insti-
nite Weight & Consequence
that

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that respect the Soul, and
trivial Things that respect
the Body, Men make us
preposterous a Judgment
and Choice, as if they were
irreconcilable Enemies to
themselves, and obstinately
averse from their own Hap-
piness. The Life to come
extends beyond all possible
Number of Ages; the Fe-
licity is so compleat and sure,
that the least shadow of E-
vil shall never eclipse it:
The Soul shall be in a state
of highest Perfection and
Joy;

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Joy; the Understanding illuminated with perfect Knowledge, with no more study, than opening the Eye and fixing it on the Glorious Objects, the Will satisfied with the perfect Love and Enjoyment of the Blessed God: The Body shall be clothed with Light as with a Garment, and shine with a Beauty that never disflourishes and decays; the innumerable Assembly of Angels and Saints always affords new and inestimable Delights; and what is set in comparison against
this

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this transcendent Felicity in Heaven? The poor despicable vanishing Life on Earth: whose Pleasures are so shallow and empty, that they can't satisfy the Senses, much less our noble and comprehensive Faculties: whose Grievs are sometimes so heavy and oppressing, that all the Comforts of the World are no more effectual to relieve the Soul labouring under them, than the sounding of Brass, and the tinckling of Cymbals,

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bals, usually done by the Heathens, were to free the Moon from its dark Eclipse, which they fancied to labour in extremity. Yet the petty Preferments, the deceitful Riches, the vain Pleasures here are chosen, and ambitiously and eagerly persued, and the infinite everlasting Happiness hereafter undervalued and rejected. But as the Wonder ceases, that a Man doth not see in the clearest Day, by saying, He is blind: so Carnal Men
are

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are without Faith, that is, the Internal Light of the Mind, they do not steadfastly believe the Reality of the Divine World, tho so clearly open'd in the Gospel. They are under so strong a Delusion and Error of Sensuality, that they vilify a Spiritual Happiness, a Glorious Futurity, and present sensible Things, of no price in comparison, have the highest place in their Esteem and Affections. The proper Means to recover Man from his woful

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ful Folly, are unceasing fervent Prayers, That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him: The Eyes of their Understandings being enlightened, that they may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints: and to represent this World, and the next, as they are to their

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their considerate Minds, that
their Interest and Duty,
with united Efficacy, may
over-rule their Hearts, and
turn the Stream of their In-
deavours into the right
Channel; that the judicious
Comparison between Objects
so vastly differing, may be
the governing Principle of
their Lives. All Things
are vain and transient,
within the Confines of Time;
all Things stable and solid
in the Territories of Eter-
nity.

JOHN

JOHN XIV. I.

In my Father's House are many Mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a Place for you.

OUR blessed Saviour in the words, applies Heavenly Comfort to his Disciples, to support their drooping Spirits in his absence from them : He foretold his departure ; *Little Children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said to the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come : so now I say unto you.* This tenderly affected their Hearts : But that their Sorrow might not flow into Despair, he assures them, that

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Ver. 36.

Ch. 19. 1.

their Separation should not be final, and that it was not the singular Privilege of St. Peter, that *he should follow him hereafter*; but that there were Rooms reserved in Heaven for them all, and He would return and receive them to Himself. This Consolation He addressees to them in a very affectionate manner, *Let not your Hearts be troubled*: No Work is more Divine, none more proper and delightful to our Saviour, than to comfort the afflicted Spirits of his People. He directs them, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*. God is the Supreme Object of Faith, his unchangeable Love and Faithfulness, with his infinite Power in the accomplishing his Promises, is the Security of Believers. Christ, as Mediator between God and guilty Creatures, is the immediate Object of our Faith; for he restores us to the Favour of God, therefore 'tis said; we believe in God by him. After this Preface to calm the unquiet

Agita-

1 Peter
1. 21.

Agitations of their Minds, and make them more receptive of comfort, he proposeth to them ;

1. A blessed Doctrine; *In my Father's House are many Mansions*, capable to receive all his Disciples.

2. Gives them an infallible assurance of it. 1. From his inviolate Love and Truth, *If it were not so, I would have told you.* 2. That his going away, was not to reign alone in the Kingdom of Glory, *but to prepare a place for them.*

The Point that I shall discourse of from these words, is this; There is a blessed Place Above prepared for all the faithful Disciples of Christ, wherein they shall be glorified with him for ever.

In the managing this Argument, I will endeavour ;

1. To represent the Excellencies of this Place specified by his Father's

House, and the state of Felicity that is inseparable from all that dwell in it.

2. Consider the infallible Assurance we have of obtaining it.

*Texvims.
Heb. 11. 10*

1. The Excellencies of this Place may be argued from the Maker of it, and its Attributes specified in Scripture. First, God is said to be the artificial Builder of this City, to signify a correspondent Excellency in the Work to the Divine Maker. All the Works of God have a Divine Impression of his Power and Providence, but in some are more conspicuous Characters of his Perfections: For the wise Author of all Things, hath ordered their several degrees of Excellence, both in the Matter, and various Art of adorning them, suitable to the End for which they were design'd. Now the supreme Heaven was made to be the Temple of the Divine Majesty, wherein he would diffuse the richest Beams of his Goodness and
Glory

Glory to his chosen Servants for ever, and accordingly is a most noble Work of his Omnipotent Hand; and there are two Remarks to be made in its Creation, from whence we may infer its peculiar Excellency.

1. 'Tis the beginning of the Creation. Amongst intellectual Beings, the Angels are the First-Born of God's Power; and in Natural and Divine Prerogatives excel Men. From hence it is that the Excellency of any praise-worthy Quality in Men, is set forth by a resemblance of the Angels. Excellent Wisdom in *David, My Lord, the King, is like an Angel of God.* Excellent Eloquence by *St. Paul, is stiled the Tongues of Angels.* Heroick Vertue, and excellent Holiness in the Christian Church, *The House of David shall be as the Angel of the Lord;* for that which is highest in any kind of Perfection, is the Rule and Measure of the degrees of that Perfection. And thus in forming the material

B 3

World,

World, the supreme Heaven hath the precedence in order and dignity, before all the other Parts of it. Indeed *Moses* only recites particularly the Creation of the visible World; and by what gradations this great Fabrick with all its Furniture was compleated: And the History of that is instructive of the Creation of invisible Things, which is expressly specified in the Gospel. But, as Paradise was first made, and then Man created to be the Inhabitant of it; so we may infer, that the highest Heaven, the Seat of the Angels, was made before they were created. Now the Angels (we are inform'd by Divine Revelation) were present when the Foundations of the Earth were laid, and God stretched his Line upon it: Then the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy. They saw the rising World, the variety and beauty of its Frame, the admirable Order that distinguishes and

Job 38. 4,
5, 7.

and unites its Parts, that all Things were divinely done, and transported with wonder and joy celebrated the praises of the Creator.

2. The Supreme Heaven is the effect of God's immediat Creation. The Earth with all its Ornaments was form'd of preexistent Matter; the *Chaos*, a confused Mass, was the *Embrio* of the sublunary World; but the Supreme Heaven is his more immediate and exquisit Workmanship, and receiv'd its Being and Perfection at once. You may illustrate this by the Account is given by *Moses* of the Creation of Man; *God made Man of the Dust of the* Gen. 2. 7. *Ground.* His Body derives its Birth from the low Element; and the Wisdom of the Creator is wonderful in the artificial structure of it: 'Tis added, *God breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul.* The Earth enters into the composition of his Body, but his Soul was inspired by
B 4 the

the Breath of God ; that is, by his Divine Power immediately created ; and in nobility of Nature, and its spiritual Endowments, incomparably excels the Body. And the third Heaven, though not a spiritual Substance, yet in the purity of its Nature, far transcends whatever was form'd of gross Matter.

This being premis'd, I will now consider what the Scripture reveals to us of that place that is eminently the House of God.

1. The Amplitude of it. Our Saviour tells us, *The Way is narrow, and the Gate strait that leads to it,* to excite our diligence ; but there are many Mansions in the Celestial Pallace to encourage our Hopes. 'Tis therefore call'd a *City, a Kingdom*. If we look up to the shining Sky, wherein are the Sun, that by the computation of late * Astronomers, some thousands of times exceeds the Earth in its magnitude ; and innumerable Stars, and some of that

* Mr.
Boyle, of
the high
Veneration
Man's In-
tellect owes
to God, &c.
p. 11.

that greatness, that they eighty times exceed this Globe of Earth; tho to the ignorant, and therefore incredulous, they are judged to be as they appear, (upon the account of that unmeasurable distance between the Firmament and us) but glistering points of Light: our Minds will be tir'd and lost in taking measures of that that seemeth boundless: and this vast Expansion, with all the glorious Luminaries, is but the Portal of the House of God. Therefore *Solomon*, setting forth the boundless Greatness of God, saith, *Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*; that is, neither the Airy nor Ethereal Heaven, nor the Supreme Heaven that encompasses and exceeds it. 'Tis a spacious Pallace, becoming the Divine Maker's Greatness, the Image of his Immensity: and the State of Felicity there is answerable. The blessed God, in whom there is an eternal Union of all Perfections,

perfections, *is all in all to his People.* The Sun in its brightness may be as truly included in a Spark, as the Divine Excellencies be measur'd by created Contemplation. There is an infinite variety in the Supreme Good, that makes it always rare and new in the fruition. The universal Love, and universal Fulness of the Deity, exceedingly satisfies all the Desires, and perpetuates the Delights of the Saints. He styles himself, in the gracious Covenant with his People, *I am God Al sufficient; walk before me, and be perfect.* He is sufficient in all things that are requisite, to the compleat Felicity of the most comprehensive Spirits; and is sufficient to make all that innumerable Company of Angels and Saints, as happy as one Person. *God is Light,* and the Emanations of his Goodness are sensibly represented by it. Heaven is call'd, *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* As the Sun (his Almoner) diffuses its
its

its Light and Heat so generally, that every one indifferently enjoys it without prejudice to others. As the Sun streams forth in Rays every moment, yet (which is a perpetual Miracle in Nature) without the least diminution of his Lustre and Efficacy : thus the Son of Righteousness dispences his influences of Knowledg, and Love, and Joy, to all the blessed Assembly above, and is the universal Happiness of all, and the entire Happiness of every Saint.

God is an inexhaustible Fountain of Felicity : As he that drinks of a living Spring, (tho inflam'd with thirst) yet leaves it flowing and full as before, sufficient to refresh a thousand Men without being dry : thus God is able to make many Worlds happy. An earthly Inheritance is either entirely and peculiarly the first Born's, or is lessen'd by division : but all *the Sons of God* have the dignity of *the first born*, and *are Heirs of God*, and enjoy an undi-

Quantum-
liber capa-
cem ven-
trem affe-
rat Fons
vincit fi-
cientem.

Aug.

Heb. 12.

Rom. 8.

undivided Inheritance. Our Heavenly Father verifies to every Saint, what the Father in the Parable said to his Son, *All that I have is thine.*

2. The stability and firmness of it. The Apostle saith, *'Tis a City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* Cities that are raised by the greatest Kings, who are corruptible, and mortal, are so sliely built, that they may be consum'd by Fire, batter'd by Storms, and without external Violence, yet from an inward principle of Decay, sink into Ruins: but Heaven is the *City of the living God*, the Seat of his eternal Empire. This present World is like a Tent pitcht for a time, whilst the Church is sojourning in the Wilderness: the most solid parts of it, the visible Heaven, and Earth, shall perish, either by an entire Consumption, or their ruin shall terminate in a renovation to a better State. But the third Heaven is above the dominion of the Elements,

Pfal. 102.
2 Peter
Chap. 3.

ments, exempted from all changes, and for ever remains. 'Tis an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away: The integrity, purity, and glory of it are always the same. 'Tis the habitation of God's Throne, He sits in Heaven secure Psalm 2. from all the tumultuous Conspiracies of his Enemies, and derides their impious Attempts, against his Son, and Church. His Throne is unshaken there, notwithstanding things below are turn'd about in a vertiginous Circle. And as the House, so the Inhabitants, and their felicity, are eternal. *Glory, Honour, and Im-* Rom. 2. *mortality, are the Reward of all that patiently continue in well-doing. Our Saviour assures his Disciples, Because I live, ye shall live also. He tasted Death for them, and swallowed it up in Victory. He declar'd in Vision to St. John, Behold, I am alive for evermore.* Revel. 1. The Lord of Life will uphold the Saints in that blessed State for ever: They shall never fall out

out of the Arms and Bosom of a gracious God. He will never withdraw his Love, and they shall never forfeit it : for Sin is from the perverseness of the Will, and disorder of the Affections, join'd with some error of the Mind. But in the Light of Glory, and full enjoyment of God, the Understanding is so perfectly illuminated, the Will and the Affections so exceedingly satisfied, that 'tis impossible they should apprehend erroneously, or desire irregularly.

This glorious Advantage the redeemed Saints have (by Jesus Christ *Heb. 9. 12.* who obtain'd eternal Redemption for them) above the Grace given to Angels and Man in the first Creation. The Angels were upon trial of their Obedience, not in a determin'd state of Felicity. Their first declination of Love and Subjection, was a downfall from their blessed Habitation. Woful change ! how unlike themselves in their original Purity, and

and Glory? An unparallel'd Example of the frailty of the Creature that forsakes God, and of the Divine Severity. Man did but stand in Paradise for a little while, and had a ruinous fall with all his Progeny. But the glorified *Saints actually sit with Christ in Heavenly Places*, and enjoy an unchangeable happy State. The felicity Above is permanent, as the everlasting Object that produces and preserves it, and the everlasting Soul wherein it dwells. Blessed Security! how triumphantly do the glorified in Heaven sing, *This God is our God for ever and ever*. Earthly Relations, how near soever, determine in Death; and the sorrow of losing them, is in proportion to the delightful enjoying them. But the Heavenly Relation between God and the Saints, is as everlasting, as the Object on which 'tis fixt: This God in whom are all amiable Excellencies, all Sweetness and Beauty to feed Desires and Delights, is our
God

God in strict propriety, in the dearest and most reviving fruition for ever. Their Happiness is crown'd with Eternity. This is so real an accession to their Felicity, that without the entire assurance of it, the state of Blessedness were incomplete; the least jealousy of losing it, would disturb their peaceful fruition, and joyful tranquillity in Heaven: For as Hope in Misery allays Sorrow, so fear in Happiness lessens Joy. The apprehension of losing such a Kingdom, would cause torment. But, as in the contrary state, reprobate Sinners that are in Hell, under an utter impossibility of deliverance, are rack'd and tortur'd by absolute despair: So the Blessed Above, that enjoy the Beatifick Vision, by the infallible assurance of its perpetuity, are fill'd with a Joy unspeakable and glorious.

3. The Sanctity of this blessed House. 'Tis separate from the rest of the World in its sublime Situation,

tion, and its unparallel'd Excellencies. Sanctity of Place is Relative, and is founded, either upon the manifestation of God's special Presence; or consecration of it to his Service. 'Tis consistent with the Divine Immenfity, to be differently present in feveral places: as the Soul is in another manner present in the Head, where it performs its nobleft Operations, than in other parts of the Body; and upon any fpecial appearance of God, a Place is Sacred. Thus when *Moses* approach'd to fee the Flaming Bush, he was enjoin'd, *Do not come near hither; pluck off thy Shoes from off thy Feet, the place where thou standest is Holy Ground.* Exod. 3. 5. The visible Testimony of the Divine Presence sanctified the Place, and the moft humble outward Reverence was due, a Sign and Effect of the internal Refpect that is owing to his moft adorable Majefty. The sanctity of that Place, was an extraordinary Relation, and ceas'd

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upon

upon the vanishing of the Flame, the sign of God's Presence. There is also a Relative Sanctity, by the Consecration of Time or Place for Holy Uses. Thus the Seventh Day, upon the finishing the Creation, was hallowed by God himself, set apart as the first Fruits of Days for his Service, and applied to Divine Worship, that Man might more entirely exercise his Mind in admiring and praising the Creator, whose Glory was visible in his Works. And in both these respects, the Temple of *Hierusalem* was Holy, as being appropriated to God's Service by his own Election and Appointment; and being the place wherein he exhibited his Presence in a special manner. *Solomon* expresseth this as the End of building the Temple, in his Letter to the King of *Tyre*, desiring

^{2 Chr. 2. 4.} his Assistance; *Behold, I build an House to the Name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet Incense, and for the*

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the continual Shewbread, and for the burnt-Offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the new Moons, and on the solemn Feasts of the Lord our God. And we read, at the Dedication of Solomon's Temple, that a suddain thick Cloud obscur'd the Air, a sign of God's descending and acceptance, whose invisible Majesty was veiled under it: and whether from that Sacred Darknes, or fear at the unexpected Miracle, the Priests could not minister because of the Cloud. The Sacrifices, Musick, and all the Temple-Service was interrupted. But the Temple built with Hands, and all its pompous Service, was but an imperfect mutable Shadow of the *Holy Temple Above*, where God exhibits his Sacred Presence, not in a dark Vapour, but in the richest Beams of Glory, and wherein that most pure Spirit is worship'd in Spirit and Truth for ever. The Saints are a *Royal Priesthood to God*, in a state of Eminency,

^{2 Chr. 5/}
^{13, 14}

^{Psal. 11. 4.}

and separation from the rest of the World: They now offer up the Sacrifice of Praise, and the sacred Incense of Prayer, infinitely more pleasing to God than all the Sacrifice of Beasts, and the most precious Gums, and Aromatick Spices, that with their sweet Smoak perfum'd the Temple. But *in the Holy of Holies Above, (where no defiled thing can enter)* they perform Divine Service in a Divine manner. The perfect Rest in Heaven, is *a Sabbath's Rest*, wherein our fervent Affections, the Springs of Activity, are in their powerful Exercise upon God. Here our faint Earth clogs our ascending Affections; and such is the tender Indulgence of our Heavenly Father, that *when the Spirit is willing, tho the Flesh be weak*, he pardons and accepts us. But there our Bodies become Spiritual, qualified for the Exercises of Heaven, and all our Powers are in a holy Heat and Rapture, admiring and praising the
blessed

bleſſed God. Here the Saints often retire from the World, to worſhip the Divine Maieſty in their Cloſets; and the ſecrecy of the Duty, is an Argument of the Sincerity. They with more freedom pour forth their Souls into his Boſom, and he inſinuates the gracious acceptance of their Requeſts: But the nobleſt elevation of the Affections, is in communion with all the Saints and Angels above. The ardent Seraphims were inflamed, crying one to another, *Ho- Iſa. 6. 3.*
ly, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory. Here there muſt be ſome interval between the ſolemn Acts of Worſhip, the Circumſtances of the preſent State require it; but in the Heavenly Sanctuary, 'tis their continual work and delight to celebrate the high Praises of God: *They are before his Throne, and ſerve him day and night in his Temple.* The Inhabitants of *Arabia the Happy*, burn, for their common uſes, thoſe Aromatick

tick Trees, that produce Myrrh and precious Balm, of which the Sacred Incense was compounded : And 'tis no wonder, because those Trees grow common in their Country, that is open to the most favourable Aspects of the Heavens, and the strongest heat of the Sun : But to our Countries, how little of those rich Perfumes are brought. And such is the Comparison between the Praises of the Angels and the glorified Saints, and ours here below. They are always in the noblest Work, excited by the highest Motives. They are always under the direct Beams of God's Favour, which are vigorously reflected in their Praises. All their Felicity is, to contemplate his excellent Perfections, all their Pleasure to love him, all their Glory to obey him. Their affectionate Praises are renewed without intermission, because the Divine Favours are renewed every moment. There is a perpetual circulation

culatation of Graces from the blessed Creator, and Thanksgivings from the happy Creature. All their joyful Affections, all their solemn Thoughts and Reflections are terminated in that great and glorious Object. The Prophet declares their holy Employment; *They continually speak of the glorious Honour of his Majesty, and of his wondrous Works: They speak of the Might of his terrible Acts; and they declare his Goodness, and sing of his Righteousness. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great Mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. All thy Works praise thee, O Lord, and thy Saints bless thee. They speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom; and thy Dominion endures through all Generations.* They never cease to love, and admire, and therefore never cease to praise him. Their

Hearts are eternally inflam'd, and their Mouths eternally open'd to glorify him. But with the highest veneration they adore his Mercy; that Perfection that is the special Glory & the dearest delight of God; that which is the supreme of all the glorious Attributes in our Redemption, that will be the principal Argument of their Praises. *They sing of the Mercies of the Lord for ever;* that Mercy that chose them from Everlasting; that Mercy that in such an admirable manner conducted them through the World, that never left them, but most wisely order'd all things below in relation to their future Happiness; that Mercy that crowns them with Life and Immortality, when the reprobate World feel the most terrible Effects of revenging Justice. We read of the Jews after their Captivity, upon their finishing the Temple, that with a transport of Joy, they cried, *Grace! Grace!* when

when God, who is the Author of our Salvation, shall have finish'd it, with what a sweet consent shall we celebrate his sacred Praises! Mercy upon Mercy, all is Mercy. Happy Exercise! Heaven is a State of Joy and Thankfulness. *Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee.*

4. The delightfulness of this Place. 'Tis call'd *Paradise* by our Saviour. He promises the penitent Thief, the Companion of his Cross, *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* Paradise was a Garden planted by immortal Hands, to be the Habitation of *Adam* in his state of original Righteousness, when the Favourite of Heaven: it was the Beauty and Delight, the Flower of the World, and with abundance, and variety, exceedingly satisfied all the desires of Life: 'twas water'd with four Rivers, to make it always pleasant, and fruitful. But the Celestial Paradise as much excels it in Beauty and Pleasantness, as in its
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sublime situation: and the joyful satisfaction of the Soul in communion with God, and the blessed Society there, infinitely excels all the innocent Delights of the natural Life. Heaven is a state of pure, full, and unfading Joy. The Joy of the Blessed is not mixt with things that may corrupt its excellence. There is an absolute exemption from all Evils. *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain.* The Joy is full; 'Tis call'd *our Master's Joy*. Great God, how ineffable is that Joy! 'Tis the richest Reward infinite Bounty can give to faithful Servants.

3 Joh. 3. 2. *As being made like to Christ in Glory,* implies a divine and full Perfection: so the *entering into his Joy*, implies the most accomplisht and incomprehensible Felicity. 'Tis a permanent Joy that none shall take from the Blessed, as our Saviour promises his Disciples.

Disciples. Here below, suppose a Person encompass'd with all the Good Things of the World, yet this Felicity is neither without Defects, nor without Dependence upon Casual Things, that he is never compleatly happy, but only less miserable: and tho he lives long in Prosperity, and hath a tenor of Health to enjoy it; yet, as the clearest Evening is presently follow'd by Night, so the most vigorous old Age is certainly attended with Death, that extinguishes all sensual pleasures. But in the *Presence of God is fulness of Joy; at his Right Hand are Pleasures for ever.*

To explain this more particularly, let us consider, that Knowledge, Love, and Joy, are the Perfections and Felicity of immortal Spirits, and are correspondent to the excellency of the Objects upon which they are fixt, and the capacity of the Faculties that are exercis'd, and the degrees of Satisfaction communicated to them.

them. Now in Heaven, our noblest Faculties, the Understanding and Will, are rais'd and enlarg'd, and entirely united to the best Objects. What conception can we frame of Joy for an intellectual Creature, so full and satisfying, as the clear Vision of God invested with all his attractive Attributes, his glorious Perfections, and in perfect loving the most lovely Object, and being perfectly lov'd by him? When the Soul freed from this mortal muddy Flesh, and the Mind clear'd from all terrene Images, convey'd by the Channels of the Senses, sees *God Face to Face*; how is it ravish'd with wonder and love in the sight of his most amiable Excellencies? How pure a Joy is infus'd to the Center of the Soul, and fills all its Desires? How permanent, like the everlasting Spring from whence it flows? The Psalmist inspir'd with the Love of God, breaks forth in an Holy Extasy; *How blessed is that Man whom*

Pfal. 65. 4.

whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts? We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy House, even of thy Holy Temple. Admirable Blessedness! dear Felicity! The same Heavenly Saint expresses his esteem and affection; How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! They shall Psal. 36.8.
be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy House: and thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleasure. Here we do but taste and see how good the Lord is; and that is so powerful a Cordial, as gloriously supports the Saints under the heaviest Sufferings. But Heaven is the Element of Joy. Here a glancing sight of his Goodness, how reviving is it? A living Vein of Light, from Acts 16.
his favourable Countenance, pierc'd 24, 25.
into the miserable Dungeon where Paul and Silas were chain'd, and rais'd their Spirits to that Heavenly pitch, that they sang Praises to God: the illustrious reflection of Paradise,
lightned

lightned them at Midnight, and put a gloss of Joy upon them. But in Heaven, those most divine and amiable Titles, that God is Light, and that God is Love, are most fully exhibited, and experimentally understood by the Saints. They see him as he is, in his essential Glory; and all the secret Treasures of his Wisdom, in his Works of Wonder are unfolded, and the sweetest Manifestations of his Love are given to them. That which the Prophet declares of God's tender Affections to his Church, is verified in the most excellent manner in Heaven; The

Zeph. 3. 17 Lord thy God in the midst of thee is Mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his Love, he will joy over thee with singing. That the blessed God is well pleased in the glorified Saints, is the supreme degree of their Felicity. How joyful a Complacency arises from the Communion with the blessed Redeemer, and the Saints in Heaven?

Heaven? Love is the first Fountain of Joy; and the more intense, the more ravishing is the Fruition. The Love of Christ to them was so great, that from Eternity he was infinitely pleas'd in the thoughts of their Salvation; *His Delights were* Prov. 8. 31 *with the Sons of Men*, before they delighted in him. If the Design of that blessed Work was so pleasing, what is the Accomplishment? The Evangelical Prophet declares, *He* Isa. 53. 11. *shall see of the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied.* And the Love of the Saints to Christ, is a correspondent Affection, according to their utmost Capacity. All the Affections that were scatter'd here below, are concenter'd in him, for he infinitely deserves their Love, having ransom'd them with the dearest Price, and purchas'd for them an everlasting Inheritance. He lov'd them in their foul deformity, that he might superinduce a Divine Beauty upon them, and prepare them for

Omnia suspiria in Christo anhelent. Ille unus pulcherri-
mus qui foedos dilexit, ut pulchros faceret, desideretur.

for the enjoyment of himself. He is now their Desire, and in Heaven where he appears in all his Brightness and Beauty, their everlasting Delight. We may conceive a little of their ravishing Communion, by the Language of Divine Love, between Christ and the Church, in the *Song of Solomon*, and their harmonious Affections exprest in the most endearing manner; *Open to me my Love, my Dove, my Undeiled: And the inflam'd Spouse, in a high and delightful rapture, breaks forth; I am my Beloved's, and he is mine.* If a Propriety and Interest in him, be productive of such a pure Joy, what will the everlasting Fruition be? The Scripture represents it by a Marriage-Feast, as the most compleat resemblance of that spiritual Joy. Thus the Inhabitants of Heaven are introduc'd, speaking; *Give Honour to him; for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready.* What Union! what

Rev. 19. 7.

what Joy! How will the Saints rejoice in God their Saviour, in the view of the surprising Wonders of his Love? The Scripture speaks of another accession to the Joys of Heaven, the innumerable Company of Angels and Saints that live in perfect Concord, inviolable Love, the sweetest Content, and joyful Complacency. Society is a principal Ingredient of Joy. What exultation of Joy will there be, when the whole Family of Heaven shall meet together in their Father's House? We may conjecture how the Angels are affected to us, by what is recorded concerning their appearance at the Birth of our Saviour; *There was a multitude of the heavenly Host praising God; saying, Glory be to God on High, on Earth Peace, good Will towards Men.* 'Tis the first time since the Fall of Man, that we hear of the Angels Song:

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They were commission'd to punish rebellious Sinners, and appear'd with flaming Swords, the Instruments of revenging Wrath. But when the Lord of Hosts became the God of Peace, they appear'd with Harps in their Hands, with Praise and Joy, celebrating his Mercy. They foresaw that Peace on Earth would end in the Glory of Heaven; and the Ruins of their Celestial Country, would be repair'd by our Salvation. And the glorified Saints are all Companions in the same Joy, and the same Blessedness. For never was there such a transforming of one Lover into another here, as there is of the Saints in Heaven: They are all animated by the same Divine Spirit; their Thoughts and Inclinations are the same, and have the highest satisfaction in the felicity of one another. Behold, how good, and how pleasant

fant is it for Brethren to dwell for ever in Unity! Briefly, we find that sensible Joy is in its elevation in the times of the Harvest and Vintage, and after Victory; when the Blessings of God, the precious Fruits of the Earth, the Hopes of our Labour, and the Support and Comfort of the present Life are received, an universal Joy fills the Country. Now *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the upright in Heart.* 'Tis sown in Tears, but reapt with Exultation. We gather the Fruits of Blessedness from Thorns, Poverty, and Mourning, Hunger, and Thirst, and Persecution: and this gives the more lively tincture to our Joy. The Joy of Victory is transporting, and that always in proportion to the Danger and Power of the Enemies subdu'd, and the rich Spoils taken from them. Now when our Spiritual Enemies, so numerous,

Sed nihil li-
 bentius popu-
 lus Romanus a-
 spexit, quam
 illas quas ti-
 muerat cum
 turribus suis
 bestias, quæ
 non sine sensu
 captivitatis
 submissiscervi-
 cibus victores
 equos seque-
 bantur. *Flor.*
 lib. I. c. 18.

so powerful and irreconcilable to our Souls, Sin, Satan, Death, are utterly broken, how triumphant a Joy follows? The Historian relating that most glorious Triumph at *Rome*, when *Pyr- rhus*, their proud and potent Enemy was expell'd from *Italy*, observes, That of all the Show, no part was more joyful, than to see the Elephants that had been so terrible, and carried Towers on their Backs, to be subdued and led in Triumph. Thus how joyful is it to see the Prince of Darkness, with all his infernal Legions, not without the tormenting sense of their Captivity, bruised under our Feet! to see the humane Nature of Christ rais'd to the highest honour to which that rebellious Spirit did proudly aspire. O how delightful a Spectacle! All the Saints will cast their Crowns before the Throne, and

and sing the Praises of their victorious Deliverer.

5. The Glory of this Place is discovered in the Scripture. *The Father of Christ is the God of Glory, and the Father of Glory*; and Heaven is his lofty and glorious Throne, becoming his Excellent Majesty and Universal Dominion. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.* Glory in its first Notion signifies the brightness and lustre of Light, and from thence metaphorically imports Excellency in any Kind. Thus the Divine Perfections are exprest, *God is Glorious in Holiness, glorious in Power*: and the Joy of Believers is call'd *unspeakable and glorious*. Heaven is set forth as glorious in a transcendent manner; 'tis call'd, the *Excellent Glory*; from whence a Voice came to the Apostles in that Holy Mount, declaring Christ to be the Son of God: So

'tis call'd, *The richly glorious Inheritance; the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* When the Sun rises in its brightness, a Deluge of Gold overflows the World, and adorns the Universe: but this is but a Shadow of the inherent Glory of the highest Heaven. 'Twas prepar'd by God for the House of his Kingdom, and the Glory of his Majesty. We reade of the vast preparations made by two great Kings for the building the Temple at *Hierusalem*: such sums of Gold and Silver, that would empty all the Treasuries of the Princes of the World; that were it not recorded in Sacred Scripture, it would exceed belief. The number of the Workmen were seventy thousand, employ'd seven Years without intermission; the Materials were very rich and splendid, Gold, and Cedar, and precious Stones: and the excellency of the Architecture was such, that no humane

Art

Art can equal: for it was model'd by the Divine Mind; and the delineation of its Parts was sent to *David* by an Angel. But what are the Preparations of Earthly Kings, to the Preparation of God? And what is the Glory of the Temple made with Hands, to that admirable Fabrick that receiv'd its Being and Perfection immediately from God? We reade of the *New Hierusalem*, the Type of Heaven, *that the Foundations were precious Stones, the Gates were intire Pearls, the Streets pure Gold, as it were transparent Glass.* The Expressions are in condescendance to our Capacities, and but a faint resemblance of the Glory of *Hierusalem* above. In the Vision of the Prophet *Esay*, the Seraphims cried to one another, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of thy Glory.* 'Tis a Theatre of innumerable Wonders divinely deck'd, and the wise discerning

Obstupescit
obruiturq; mi-
raculis.

Aug.

Observer, admires and praises God's Power and Providence so clearly manifested in it: For the Excellency of the Work is answerable to the Art of the Maker; and the Glory of the Maker results from the Excellence of the Work. But what the Apostle saith, in comparing the Legal and Evangelical Dispensation, *That if that which was done away, was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious*; and in that degree of eminence as to obscure the other, may justly be applied to the Glory of God appearing in the Earth, and the third Heaven: for if the Earth, the lowest stage of the World, the Habitation of Brute Creatures, and to be continued only for a time, hath so much Glory in it, what an excellent Glory is in the Supreme Heavens, the native Habitation of the Angels, and that is to continue for ever? The Earth since Man's Rebellion,

lion, doth not remain in its Primitive State, but hath lost much of its Beauty and Usefulness. At first it was intirely suitable to the rich Goodness of the Creator; now terrible mixtures of his Justice appear in all the parts of it: Barrenness in the Earth, Thorns and Thistles, the Fruits of the Curse for Sin; Malignant Influences, and Storms in the Air, Tempests in the Sea, Inundations of Water; and how many Diseases are fatally natural to our Bodies? But the highest Heaven remains in its original Beauty, and pure Integrity. The Earth is now the Habitation of his Enemies, where they oppress his faithful Servants by their bold Injuries: but Heaven is the Habitation of his Saints. In short, 'tis a Place becoming the Majesty and Magnificence of God, and his Love to his chosen Friends. 'Tis said of the Patriarchs, whose
Desires

Desires and Hopes were not centred in that Earthly *Canaan*, tho flowing with Milk and Hony; but *they desir'd a better Country*, that is, a *Heavenly*; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a City. To be stiled our God, is a Title of the richest value, and implies, that all the Perfections of the Deity are to make us happy. It had been a reflection upon his Greatness and Goodness, if he had only given to the Patriarchs a Portion in this World. But Heaven is a Place and State of Felicity becoming his Infinite Majesty, his special Love, and eternal Duration. 'Tis an Observation of *Tertullian*, That God who made other Things by command, by the omnipotent Umpire of his Will, appli'd himself with Counsel to form the Body of *Adam*, which was the original Model of all Perfections that

Totum Deum
occupatum, &
deditum ma-
nu, opere, con-
silio, sapientia.
Amor dictabat
lineamenta.

a humane Body is capable of, for the beauty of Aspect without, and the artificial order of the Parts within ; and the reason was, Love drew the Lineaments. Thus Love, the Queen of the Divine Attributes , employ'd infinite Wisdom, and almighty Power, to build this Celestial City for the reception of his chosen Favourites. The King of Glory dwells there in a special manner. *The Heaven, even the Heavens are the Lord's ; but the Earth hath he given to the Children of Men.* By Right and Dominion, *the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof,* and the possession of it is from his Bounty to Men ; but Heaven is reserv'd for himself, the Place of his glorious Residence. As a Prince that hath many Houses, gives some for to be inhabited by his Servants, but the Imperial Palace is kept for his own Dwelling ; God manifests himself

self there in the most refulgent manner. All the Perfections of the Glorious Déity are reveal'd to the Saints in their purity and radiancy. The Divine Presence is the Supreme Glory of Heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ is there crown'd with the Majesty of the Divine Empire. This Glory is the Reward of his meritorious Obedience and Sufferings. He was made a Subject and a Servant, and endur'd the most ignominious cruel Death to satisfy God's injur'd Justice. What hath not the Son done for the Glory of his Father? He lost his Life rather than his Obedience: And what will not the Father do for the Honour of his Son? What Recompence is correspondent to such astonishing Humiliation? Our Saviour in his last solemn Prayer with his Disciples, addresses himself to God: *I have glorified thee on Earth; I have finish'd the*

John 17. 4, 5.

the Work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me with thy Self, with the Glory I had with thee before the World was. The Father was so highly honour'd by Christ, that to satisfy his infinite Love towards him, he hath dignified him with a Name and State, that transcends all created Glory. He is the Lord of Angels, the Head of the Church, and sits at the right Hand of Majesty on high. In Heaven he appears in his triumphant Glory, of which in the Transfiguration there was a transient glimpse, when his Face did shine as the Sun, but allayed and moderated, that his Disciples might sustain his Presence. There the Angels, the Princes of the Celestial Court, in all their bright Orders encompass the Throne of God, and pay their humblest Homage to him. The Saints appear there in their Robes of Glory, for they are trans-

transform'd into the glorious likeness of the Son of God : Their Souls radiant with pure unspotted Holiness, shine through their Bodies, as Sun-beams transmitted through Chrystal. They all reign in Sovereign State for ever. It becomes the Divine Majesty, that all God's Subjects should be Kings ; and the highest Principality on Earth, is but servitude compar'd with the Royalty enjoy'd by the Saints above : For how often are the mightiest Monarchs on Earth in perfect bondage to their lawless Passions, and the Soul in dull captivity to the sensual Appetites ? How often are the strongest Empires dissolv'd and ruin'd ? But the Saints in Heaven, by obeying God, reign triumphantly : no Passions, no Fears, no Desires resist their Will ; nothing is able to trouble the sincere Delight, the perfect Tranquillity of their State. They
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in their several degrees of Glory, shine like the Stars for ever and ever.

To sum up all ; What is promised to the Church, is fulfill'd in Heaven ; *The Sun shall be no more* Isa. 60. 19. *thy Light by Day, nor the Moon by Night ; but the Lord shall be thy everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory.*

Thus I have endeavour'd to represent that luminous Palace, and the bright Inhabitants : but how short is the description of the glorious Realities, all humane Words are too weak and narrow to express it as it is. The Glory and Joy of that blessed State are unspeakable, as the Apostle, a Spectator thereof, certifies. And 'tis observable that our Saviour himself expresses the greatest Things, by low familiar Terms and Resemblances ; as he tells his Faithful Disciples, they shall eat and drink at his Table

Table in his Kingdom. In his Promises of Rewards, it was not his intention meerly to make a shew of his Power, but to declare his Love: Like a God, he doth not magnify the Favours he will bestow, but leaves it to their Spirits to conceive what becomes Almighty Goodness to bestow on his Servants. In the plainest manner of promising the Reward, there is a clear Character of the excellent Greatness of the Giver and his Gifts.

I will now consider the infallible Assurance we have of this blessed Place and State. This is built on our Saviour's Love to them, and his Truth; and his going to prepare that Blessedness for them. He saith to his Disciples, *Otherwise I would have told you*; implying, that his Affection and Sincerity, make it impossible that he should deceive them with
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an empty Promise of future Happiness.

(1.) His Love secures them. He would never have chosen them to be the Companions of his Cross, never have expos'd them as Sheep among Wolves, to suffer for his sake, and to leave them for ever, and reign alone in Heaven. Love is a benevolent affection rising in the Breast, and expressing it self in real Benefits, according to the Power of the Lover, and the Wants or the Capacity of the Person beloved : and the more intense the Affection is, the more evident and noble effects of Kindness will proceed from it. All the most liberal Expressions, without real performance, are but a vain pageant of Friendship. Now, the Love of our Saviour to his Disciples, was not only sincere, but in such a degree of eminence, that they might safely rely upon his Promises. His pure
E Love,

Love, was the motive of selecting them from the World, and dignifying them with the endearing title of his Friends. His Conversation with them was infinitely sweet, a Miracle of Benevolence: and that glorious performance of his Love for them, and all Believers, in leaving Heaven for their sakes, is the strongest assurance that he will bring them to his Father's House above.

Amicitia nomen privatum non solum intra aulam vocasti, sed indutam auro, gemmisq; redimitam folio recepisti. Lat. Paneg. ad Theod.

'Tis represented as the peculiar Glory of *Theodosius*, that he seated Majesty and Love in the same Throne: for Love unites and conforms Persons, and makes them, as it were, Peers: and it seems too low a submission for a Sovereign to descend from his Throne to a kind of equality with a Subject, or too high an exaltation to assume a private Person into such a degree of affection, as to make him as himself; yet such was the condescension of that great

great and amiable Emperor. But how distant is the greatest Monarch in the World from the Eternal Son of God, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth? Love brought him down from his Throne in Heaven, where he was ador'd by the Angels, and united him to our nature in our lowly state, in order to the raising us to his Kingdom, and uniting us to himself in Glory. Love unvaluable and incomparable! If Solomon, upon God's descending in a Cloud to take possession of the Temple, was surpriz'd with heavenly astonishment; *But will God indeed dwell on Earth?* with infinite more cause have we, considering the incarnation of the Son of God, to say, *Will God indeed dwell on Earth?* For what was the appearance of a Vapour that might be easily dispell'd, to the coming of Jesus Christ into the World, in whom the Fulness of the God-

head dwelt substantially? What is so worthy of reverence and admiration? New Things suspend the actings of the mind, glorious Things overwhelm the Faculty; and never was there so rare and excelling an Object. This so signal and amazing Effect of our Saviour's Love, gives assurance to Christians, that he will take them to an everlasting Communion with himself in Glory. As 'tis more for a Prince to live with a private Person in a Cottage with complacency, than to receive that Person into his Court, and invest him with Honour. The Love of our Saviour never abated to his Disciples; when he was in view of Death, with its troops of Terrors, 'tis said, *Having lov'd his own, he lov'd them to the end.* And after his Resurrection to a Heavenly Life, he express the same dear affection, *Go to my Brethren!* a stile as high as Love can rise.

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'Tis further considerable what was touch'd on before, that the Disciples of Christ, besides the common Calamities of Mankind wherein they are involv'd, are for his Truth and Cause expos'd to Indignities and Injuries of all kinds and degrees, which the malice of Satan and his Instruments, the perverted World, can fasten upon them. The complaint of the Church of old is often renew'd, *For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter.* And can the Love of Christ, so tender, so compassionate, that the Love of a Mother to a sucking Infant is not an adequate representation of it; can such Love let the Saints be separated from him for ever? Then, according to the Apostle's expression, *If in this Life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all Men most miserable.*

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(2.) His

(2.) His Truth gives an infallible assurance that we shall be receiv'd with him in Glory. He declares his own Titles, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* If Truth it self be true, and deserves our intire trust, we may rest upon his Promises, who values his Word more than the World. The Pillars of Heaven shall fall, and the Foundations of the Earth be overthrown, before one tittle of his Words shall be without a full accomplishment. *If any Man serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my Servant be.* 'Tis his most gracious Promise to encourage Obedience: and he assures his Disciples, *If I go away, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my self; that where I am, there ye may be also.* To shew the validity of Christ's Promise, let us consider, the unchangeable Perfections of God's Nature

Mat. 5.

John 12. 26.

Nature are the Foundation of his unchangeable Councils; and from thence the unchangeableness of his Promises is justly inferr'd. The Decrees of God are engraven with the point of a Diamond, and are unretractible. *The Counsel of the Lord shall stand:* for such is the perfection of his Knowledge, that he can never be surpriz'd by any sudden unforeseen Event that should induce a change of his Will; and such is his Omnipotence, that he gives an infallible accomplishment to his Decrees: *and his Word endures for ever.* 1 Pet. 1. 25.

The immutability of his Nature, gives firmness to his Counsels; and the fidelity of his Nature to his Promises. *In him there is no variableness, nor shadow of change: and he is God that cannot ly:* He reveals himself by his Name *Jehova* to his People, to signify, that he is the same in performing, as in promising. Now Jesus

Christ his Son is equal to the Father in all essential Perfections. He stiles himself *the Amen, the true and faithful Witness*: If he deceive his Servants with a false expectation of a joyful glorious State hereafter, it would be a blemish to his unspotted Holiness, an eternal reflection upon his inviolate Truth. 'Tis therefore a faithful Saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That where Christ is in Glory, there shall his Servants be with him, otherwise *he would have told them.*

2. We are to consider the other firm ground of assurance in our Saviour's next words: *I go to prepare a place for you.* This specially respects his Ascension into Heaven, but it supposes his Death. He purchas'd Heaven by his Death: He prepares it by his Ascension. His Blood shed on the Cross, and pleaded in Heaven,

ven, gives to Believers a right to it here, and actual possession hereafter.

1. His obedient Sufferings are the price of this glorious Inheritance. In our Guilty State, Heaven is as inaccessible to us, as Paradise was to *Adam* after his expulsion, when guarded by a Cherubim with a flaming Sword, For neither the Divine Wisdom, nor the Law of God would permit that an unpardon'd Sinner should be receiv'd into his Kingdom. The Justice of God doth not infringe his rich Goodness, but that he may bestow upon an innocent Creature the most excellent Blessings, the Testimonies of his Bounty. If *Adam* had persever'd in his Duty, God might have translated him to Heaven, and that happy change had been a free Favour: for his Obedience had not been comparable to the Glory that shall be revealed in the Saints.

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But Justice sets up a Legal Barr against the Guilty; they are excluded from the Heavenly Glory. The Creature must be intirely innocent, or graciously pardon'd, to be capable of enjoying that Supreme Happiness. When the guilt of Sin is abolish'd, it hath no malignant Power, either to subject us to Evil, or deprive us of Good. Now our Saviour by satisfying the Injur'd Justice of God, hath wash'd away our Sins in his Blood; and hath infinitely pleas'd God, that we obtain by him, not only redemption from Hell, but the possession of Heaven. This was the Design of God's Love, in giving his *only begotten Son, that whoever believes should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* Accordingly the Apostle saith, *That being justified by his Grace through Jesus Christ, we should be made Heirs of Eternal Life.* And by the gracious unalterable

Heb. 9. 12.

Titus 3. 7.

alterable tenour of the Gospel, these great Benefits are inseparable ; it being equally impossible that an unpardon'd Sinner should enter into Heaven, or that a pardon'd Sinner should be excluded. The Connexion is indissolvable ; *Whom he justifies, them he glorifies.* Rom. 8.30. Nay, 'tis more easily credible, that a pardon'd Sinner should be admitted into the glorious Presence of God, than that a guilty Sinner should be reconciled to him. As supposing the revival of a Phoenix from its Ashes, 'tis more easily conceivable that it should take its flight upwards, which is the natural Motion of a living Bird, than that it should be restor'd to Life in such a miraculous manner. In short, Heaven is a free Gift to us, but dearly bought by our Saviour ; 'tis *the Gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* He had a double Title to Heaven, as the Son

Son of God, he was Heir of his Kingdom; this Title is incommunicably his own: and he acquir'd it by his meritorious Sufferings: This he imparts to Believers, *who enter into Heaven by the new and living Way, which he consecrated for them through his Flesh.*

2. He ascended into Heaven to prepare a Place for us. The Actions of our Saviour may be considered two ways; either as terminated in himself, or with a relative respect to Believers, as the Head of the Church. His Resurrection was not merely Personal, but hath an operative Force in raising all the Members of his Mystical Body: As *David's* subduing *Goliath*, was not his own personal Victory simply, but was extended in its happy Consequences to all his Nation: for in him, as their Champion, the Army of *Israel* overcame the
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Philistims. Jesus Christ, as Head of the Church, hath broken the Dominion of Death; and by virtue of his Conquest, the Grave shall restore the Saints at the general Resurrection. And his Ascension was not a personal Act purely to obtain his own Right; but as our Forerunner he is enter'd for us into Heaven. As the High Priest in his majestick mysterious Habit, with the Names of the Children of *Israel* upon his Breast, enter'd into the Holy of Holies; so Jesus Christ enter'd into the Eternal Sanctuary as our Representer, to take possession of it for us. The Language of Despair is silenc'd for ever, *Who shall ascend up to Heaven to raise us thither?* Christ is lifted up to the highest Glory, and will draw all his People after him. The first *Adam* was from the Earth, Earthly; but Christ is the Lord from Heaven, and is return'd

return'd to Heaven: and shall Earth destroy what Heaven cannot restore? The Apostle tells us, *That Believers sit with Christ in Heavenly Places*; that is, as he is the Head of that Sacred Society, his Church; and his Promise is exprest, *To him that overcomes, will I grant personally to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also am set down with my Father in his Throne.* After victorious Obedience, the Saints shall be taken into Sovereign Alliance with Christ, and reign for ever. In short, his excellent Merit is the Foundation of our glorious Hope: and his prevailing Intercession introduces us into actual Possession. He that purchas'd Heaven, disposes of it by his last Will; thus he address'd to his Father immediately before his Death; *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may see my Glory:* And he has Power
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to accomplish his own Testament. What he hath done already for Believers is an uncontrollable Evidence, and invincible Assurance of what he hath promised. There is a vaster distance between the Deity and Misery, than between Man and the Heavenly Glory. For the Sun to go backwards ten Degrees, was miraculous and astonishing; but to ascend the Horizon, is according to natural Order. The abasement of the Son of God was stupendious, but his advancement to the highest Glory is most becoming his Divine Relation, and infinitely due to his exuberant Merits, and a firm Foundation of Hope, that all his redeemed Saints *shall be where he is*, and be conform'd to him in all supernatural Divine Excellencies of Soul and Body for ever.

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The Application.

1. **L**ET us adore the unconceivable Love of God, who hath prepar'd such a Place of Joy, and Glory for his Children when they leave the World. The Father prepar'd it in his Decree from Eternity, and by his creating Power from the Foundation of the World: and we are assur'd 'tis such a Place and State, as fully answers the Design of God's Love, that is, to make a reasonable Creature as happy as 'tis capable to be. When Man was turn'd Rebel against his Creator, when so chang'd from the Divine Resemblance impress'd at first upon him, into the disgraceful *likeness of the Beasts that perish*, as the Psalmist justly reproaches him; then to pardon us, and prefer us; to restore us to his
Favour,

Favour, and Image, and the nearest communion with himself in his Palace above, is such an astonishing Mercy as is only proper to *God who is Love*. And the Love of our Redeemer is equally admirable; when we were expell'd Paradise, he makes a reentry for us, and intercepts the stroke of the flaming Sword that had destroy'd us. We neither know the depth of our Misery from whence we are freed, nor the height of Glory to which we are rais'd by our Redeemer. In what Heart but that of the Son of God, could ever such compassion and charity be conceiv'd? He took our Flesh to Heaven to prepare it for us, and interchangeably left his Spirit on Earth to prepare us for Heaven. How just is the solemn and terrible denunciation of the Apostle, *He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.*

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And

And how are we obliged to God for the blessed and glorious Gospel, that infinitely excels all humane Books in the matter it contains, the everlasting Happiness of Man, and the certain way to obtain it, and in the manner of conveying those great and Sacred Truths by Divine Revelation? And what an Argument of thankfulness is it to consider the distinguishing Grace of God; that when the most are so blind in the clear Light of the Gospel, as not to discover the lustre of the Pearl of Price, and so immers'd in Vanities as to disrelish Heavenly Joys, that he is pleased to enlighten the Eyes of our Mind, that we may know *what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.* The number of Fools that understand not the Price that is put into their Hands, in comparison of the truly

truly Wise, is greater than of common Stones that lie in the Mire of the Streets, to precious Stones of the highest value, Diamonds and Rubies: *How affectionately should we give thanks to the Father who has made us meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* But we have such Alays by the Relicks of Carnality, that without the Heavenly Spirit's inspiring our cold Earth, we shall never be ardent and lively in the Praises of our Blessed Benefactor. Even David himself was fain to call upon his Soul with repeated fervency, and excite every Faculty within him, to bless the Lord, who had forgiven his Iniquities, and redeem'd his Life from destruction, and crown'd him with loving Kindness, and tender Mercies.

2. From hence we may infer the great Guilt of Unbelievers in the Christian Church; and such

are all those who implicitly despise and reject Heaven for the present World. This will aggravate the Sin and Sentence of the Carnal and Worldly, that they despise such glorious Realities for empty Vanities. Desperate Gamblers, that venture a Kingdom at every Throw! What blindness of Mind, or rather perverseness of Heart is it, that Men pursue with their best strength and desires, the fading and false World, and slight Heaven an inestimable and everlasting Treasure. Certainly when Death shall open their Eyes, they will have chang'd thoughts of Things. 'Tis related by a wise Historian, That a Citizen pleaded his own Cause of great moment before *Philip* King of *Macedon*, who slept during the Plea; and a little after pass'd an unrighteous Judgment against him; the injur'd Person reply'd, I appeal
from

Plut.

from your Sentence. A word that seem'd so presumptuous to an Independent Sovereign, that with indignation the King asked him, To whom he appeal'd? He answered, From the King sleeping, to the King waking. Thus Men who are led by Sense, are asleep, whilst the Cause of infinite Concernment, eternal Salvation, is faithfully pleaded by the Advocates of their Souls; and they determine for the Interest of the Flesh against the Spirit; but their waking Thoughts will discover the unrighteousness of their carnal Judgment. In the next State how will they with restless Anguish remember their foolish Bargain, to exchange an everlasting Treasure for fading Toys? We may a little conjecture the Torments of the Damn'd, by the Terrors of the Dying; then the enlightned guilty Conscience makes them cry out, O that we

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had been wise, so to use the World that we might enjoy God! O that we had been so careful to have obtain'd an Interest in Heaven, as we have been to gain the Earth! Then the stinging Remorse begins that shall never end.

3. Let us make it our fixed Aim, our zealous constant Endeavour to secure our Title to this heavenly Inheritance. Let Eternity be our Counsellor, and guide our Choice. Let us not build our Felicity on the Sand, but on the Rock that cannot be shaken. Such is the excellent Goodness of God reveal'd in the Gospel, that every Person that sincerely and regularly seeks Heaven, shall obtain it, and no Person shall be depriv'd of it, but for his wilful neglect. Now our Blessed Saviour, who open'd the Eternal Kingdom, has declar'd to us upon what terms it may be obtain'd,

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in his conference with *Nicodemus*; John 3.
Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Natural Birth, and Accomplishments, tho never so high and noble, are of no advantage there. The degeneracy of Man from his Primitive Holiness, makes him both unworthy and incapable of having a right or possession of Heaven, without a Divine Change, a Spiritual Regeneration. The supernatural Inheritance is annexed to the being born of God: that is, the receiving a Principle of Life, and Actions suitable to the Life of God, in universal Holiness and Righteousness. 'Tis not a ground of Title to Heaven, that we have a natural alliance to God, as the Father of Spirits in the first Creation, but we must be his Off-spring by a new and more excellent Creation, according to our Saviour's words;

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That

That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. We must be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, spiritualiz'd in our Affections, before we can obtain an interest in his Love, which was forfeited by our Rebellion, and consequently in his Kingdom. Adoption into God's Family, and the Line of Heaven, is always in conjunction with the renovation of the Divine Nature and Image in us. The Holy Spirit witnesses with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God: but his witnessing is always consequent to his working in us those Graces that constitute us to be the Children of God: an humble Fear to offend him, a Care to please him, a Zeal for his Glory, delight in Communion with him, resignation to his Will and Wisdom, trust on his Fatherly Love, and a desire to be in his Blessed Presence. By the discovery of these filial Affections, our Divine Rela,

Relation is made sure. The Apostle infers, *If Sons, then Heirs.* Holiness is the infallible Evidence of Election; for *the Vessels of Mercy are prepar'd by Holiness for Glory*; the Seal of Adoption, whereby God's Children are distinguish'd from the World; and *the Earnest of their Inheritance* 2 Cor. 5. 5. for Heaven, is a blissful State of Purity; and the Graces with the Comforts of the Spirit, are the beginnings of it here. 'Tis further to be observ'd, that our right in the Heavenly Inheritance, depends upon our union with Christ. He instates his Members in the same Relation with himself to God. Thus he declares to his Disciples, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* Christ's Relation hath precedency in Point of Dignity and Causality; and he derives a Right to us in his Father's House: *We are Coheirs with Christ.*

Heb. 12. 23.

Christ. Now 'tis universally and necessarily true what the Apostle saith, *Whoever is in Christ, is a new Creature.* For our vital Union with him, is by the Sanctifying Spirit on Christ's part; and by Faith and Love on our part. Briefly, *Without Holiness; no Man shall see God.* The Exclusion is absolute and universal of all un-sanctified Persons. 'Tis impossible God should admit them into Heaven; for the Rights of Justice are inviolable: we must come to Christ's Tribunal before we come to his Throne: We must come to God the Judge of all, before we are admitted into the number of *Just Men made perfect.* According to our Works the Reward will be: and Men are incapable of enjoying Heaven without Holiness. The Wisdom of God appears, in that the various sorts of Creatures live in the Elements from which they were produc'd, and have

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Natures suitable to the Places of their Residence. The Beasts that were form'd from the Earth, walk and rest there: the Birds and Fishes that were produc'd out of the Waters, the one sort flies in the Air, that is, rarefied Water; the other swim in Water, that is, the thickest Air; and that Wisdom more evidently appears in suiting the everlasting States of Men to their moral Dispositions. *Thus we must be born from above, &c.* if we would joyfully live above. The Apostle tells us, *That Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* The natural Body must be spiritualiz'd and invested with Celestial Qualities, before it can enter into that Glorious Place: and the Reason is more strong, that earthly sensual Souls can never enter into Heaven, there being an absolute Contrariety, and Opposition between the habitual constitution of such, and

2 Cor. 5.

and that place and state: they must be Holy and Heavenly, to be prepar'd for the Divine Presence, and to converse with the purified Assembly Above; *'till they are wrought for that blessed End, cleansed, and purified, and endued with Holy Qualities, till they are made meet, they cannot possess the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* How vain and impossible are the hopes of unrenewed Sinners? The Presence and Conversation of the Saints is now an offence to them, damps their carnal Jollity and wild Mirth, for it upbraids their neglect of Serious Religion. How fearful will the sight of God be to them? If the unpurg'd Eye cannot bear the Light of a Candle, how will it sustain the glorious Light of the Sun? The Lord's Day, in its Sacred employment, is their burden; how can they expect to enjoy an everlasting Sabbath Above?

How

How can there be a lively Hope of Heaven, that implies perfection of Holiness, when they neither seriously desire, nor endeavour to be Holy? They may have a Cobweb Hope that will be swept away, but Hope that is as an Anchor to secure the Soul, hath always a purifying influence on the Heart and Life. *Whoever* 1 John 3. 3. *hath this Hope of being like to Christ in Glory, purifies himself even as he is pure.* In short, as the Jews had a carnal conceit of the *Messias*, and transform'd him into a temporal Prince coming with Pomp and Splendor, to free their Nation from Bondage, and exalt it to the highest Dominion in the World: and this Conceit so strongly possess'd them, that when the Son of God, who was Holy, Harmless, and Undeiled, and separate from Sinners, appear'd in an humble state to reform and save Mankind, they rejected him:

Thus

Thus the unregenerate have a carnal conceit of Heaven: They can only fancy it as a place of visible Glory, and a Sanctuary and Refuge from the Torments of Hell, and in that Notion desire it; but as the Place wherein that Holy God is enjoyed and glorified by the Saints, they cannot desire nor delight in it.

4. From hence we should be induc'd to regulate our Minds, Affections, and Conversation, becoming our present State and future Hopes. Our Father's House, our Everlasting Home is Above, and here we are Strangers in Condition, and should be so in Disposition to present Things. This should lessen our Esteem, our Desires and Delights, and moderate our Endeavours with respect to the present World. 'Tis the wise and earnest counsel of St. Peter, *Dearly beloved Brethren, I beseech*

beseech you, as Pilgrims and Strangers, abstain from fleshly Lusts, that war against the Soul. Sensual Lusts darken the Mind, that it doth not rightly value Things, nor make judicious Comparisons between superficial fleeting Things of Time, and the sure and solid good Things of Eternity. The lower Appetites are not capable nor careful to obtain a Spiritual and Future Happiness, but intensely applied to what is present and sensible. But the serious Thoughts of our present Tenure, how frail, how uncertain, and of the next State how unchangeable and fixt, would be effectual to frame our Hearts that we may manage the World with indifferent Affections; To rejoice in it, as if we rejoiced not; to buy as if we possessed not; to use it so as not to abuse it. How doth the Faith of the Saints under

der the Law upbraid our Infidelity. They had not so clear a revelation of the Heavenly State, yet they *confest they were Pilgrims and Strangers on Earth, and desir'd a better Country.* And David not only when he was as a Partridge chas'd upon the Mountains, but when seated on the Royal Throne, acknowledges, *We are Strangers, as all our Fathers were;* and his Affections were accordingly weaned from the World. Was ever Passenger so foolish, that being to pass over a narrow Strait of the Sea of a days sayling, makes Provisions for a Voyage of a Year? or that will be at great cost to paint an Inn, and adorn it with rich Furniture, where he is to lodge but a Night? 'Tis incomparably more reproachful folly, to spend the best of our Time, and Strength, and Spirits for the gaining the present World,
as

as if we were to continue here for ever. How many are sensual, and secure in their earthly Enjoyments, 'till as the rich Voluptuary, that was cloth'd in Purple, and far'd deliciously every day, they unexpectedly die, and irrecoverably drop into Hell. Just like a Traveller, that lays himself under the shadow of some Trees in his way Home, and sleeps till the Night with its Darkness and Dangers surprizes him, and he is destroyed by Robbers or wild Beasts. How plain and necessary a Lesson is the vanity and shortness of the present Life? but how few effectually learn it? The Psalmist addresses himself to God for Instruction; *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* Let Men fancy what they please of their Tenure here, they are but Strangers, and have

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no continuing City here; and the consequent Duty is most clearly and strongly urged by the Apostle, Let them seek one to come.

5. Let our Conversation be in Heaven, whilst we are upon the Earth. Every Thing in Nature, hath a tendency to its Original and Perfection. Rivers that come from the Sea, are in a living Motion returning thither; If you stop their Course, and confine them, though in Receptacles of Marble, they corrupt and die. The Divine Nature in the Saints hath a strong tendency to Heaven from whence it came, and raiseth the Soul by solemn Thoughts, and ardent Desires, to that Blessed Place. A Philosopher that was ask'd of what Country he was; replied, He was a Citizen of the World. The Scripture corrects the
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the Language, and teaches us that we are Citizens of Heaven ; we are passing to the *Jerusalem Above, the Land of Promise, the true Land of the Living* : and all our Aims and Endeavours should have a final respect thither. *Our Hearts should be where our Treasure is.* How joyful, how advantageous is a Heavenly Conversation ? The serious and believing Contemplation of Heaven, is a temperate Extasy, and brings the Soul into the Divine Presence : anticipates the Joy of it by a sweet foretast, by a supernatural elevation of Mind : by frequent lively Thoughts of our Glorious Inheritance, we gradually enter into it : the prospect of that causes in the Saints, a Holy Contempt of the World, as not worthy our Ambition and Diligence : it causes such a self-denial from the inviting temptation

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tations of Sense, that Men, whose Portion is in this Life, are forc'd to admire their restraint from those Objects that ravish Carnal Hearts. A Heavenly Christian will improve sensible Things for spiritual Ends; as Feathers that have a natural Weight inclining to the Center, yet planted in the Wings of a Bird, by a living Motion, carry it aloft in the free Air. Our rising in the Morning, is an Emblem of the Resurrection from the Grave, to behold the bright Day of Eternity. All the Refreshments and Comforts of the present Life, should be an advantage to raise our Minds to God, who is the Supreme Good, whose Fulness eminently contains all Good, and infinitely exceeds all our Expectations. Heavenly Love will dry up the Vanity of our Thoughts and Affections, and
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rescue the Mind from the prostitution to sensible Things, and most pleasantly exercise it upon Things Above. Love between Friends is maintain'd by immediate Converse, or by Letters, when absent: thus is Love between God and the Soul: And if God, that is to himself his own Blessedness, his own Kingdom and Glory, yet is pleas'd in his gracious Communications to his Children on Earth; how much more should they by frequent and affectionate Duties, address to him who is their eternal Infinite Good. Thus they are acquainted with him, and enjoy a sweet Peace, and obtain an humble Confidence of appearing before him in his Holy and Glorious Habitation: whereas those who live without God in the World, are justly fearful of Death; for then the Spirit returns to God

that gave it. Briefly, let us with zealous Affections, and persevering Diligence prepare ourselves for the Presence of God, and the Society of Blessed Spirits in our Father's House: *Let us always abound in the Work of the Lord, knowing our Labour is not in vain*: Let us join Works of Charity with Works of Piety; employ the fading Riches of the World for the Relief of the Saints; that as our Saviour Promises *when we shall fail*, when in the Hour of Death our *Flesh and Hearts shall fail us*, and our Souls be dislodged from our Earthly Tabernacles, *we may be received into Eternal Habitations*. The Everlasting Judg, that dispenses Rewards and Punishments, has acquainted us with the Rule of Judgment at the last Day: Those who mercifully relieve him in his Members, shall
inherit

Luke 16. 9.

inherit the Kingdom of Glory; and those who neglect that Duty, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. Though many who are wretchedly careless of doing Good according to their Ability, now satisfy themselves that they are not injurious to others: Yet it will be a small mitigation of their Sentence at last, that they are condemn'd, not for the Defect of Justice, but of Charity.

6. Let the belief that there are Mansions of Rest and Joy prepar'd for the Saints in their Father's House, gloriously support them under their heaviest Troubles here. This World is the Devil's Circuit, wherein he is alwayes ranging about seeking to devour: The pleasant Things of the World are his Temptations to ensnare the Carnal; the Men of the World are his Instruments to

Sext Empirie
cont, Mathem.

oppress the Saints ; and were it not for the Restraints of the Divine Power, what Desolations would be made in God's Heritage ? 'Twas a strange and barbarous Custom among the *Persians*, that upon the Death of the Emperor, for five days the Empire was left without Government. And as upon removing the Stone from the Fabulous Cave of *Aeolus*, the Winds broke out in their fury : so by taking away the authority of the Laws, licence was given to all Licentiousness, and the whole Kingdom was in mortal Paroxysms. All were in Arms, some to do Injuries, others to revenge them : the Chastity of none was secure, but conceal'd, nor the Estates of any but defended : the Bridle of Fear was taken off, no Wickedness but was boldly committed, or attempted, and the Kingdom became

became a Field of Bloody War. But when the new King was proclaim'd, all things were immediately reduc'd to Order, that the Advantage of Government might be set off by the experimental Confusions and Mischiefs of Anarchy. But if God left the perverted World, and Satan the Prince of it, one day to their rage against his People, did he not shut it *in with Doors, and Bars*, as he doth the impetuous Ocean; so swelling and diffusive is their Malignity, that it would, like the Deluge, drown all, and not a Remnant of the Saints would be left. Yet God wisely permits many Temporal Evils to be inflicted on his Servants by their Enemies, for the tryal of their Fidelity, and their noble Resolution to glorify him whatever they suffer for his sake. And it becomes them, with an

undisturb'd serenity of Mind, and harmony of Affections, with an invincible Patience, to bear all the Scorn and Contempt, all the Malice, and Fury to which they are expos'd upon a Christian account. Let them remember *they are Strangers and Sojourners here*, and live by other Laws than the World doth, which causes their hatred: But in their Father's House there will be perfect Rest. St. Paul, who had experience of both in a singular manner, declares, *I reckon that the Sufferings of the present State, are not worthy to be compar'd to the Glory that shall be reveal'd in us*. In that State of pure Felicity, there are no remains of Afflicting Evils; all is Peace, and Joy, and Glory.

Seneca the Philosopher, when an Exile, and confin'd to the Mountains of *Corfica*, entertain'd him-

himself with the contemplation of the Heavens, and the bright Luminaries, in their various but regular Motions: Thus when banish'd from the Court and City, he dwelt amongst the Stars, and casting his Eyes down upon the Earth, despis'd all Humane Greatness and Possessions, (that are so vainly magnified by figurative Flatteries) as we do a grain of Sand. Did Philosophy inspire him with such Principles of Patience and Fortitude? yet it ascended no higher than the visible Heavens. How much more should Faith that raises a Christian, by high and steady Thoughts, to the Supreme Heaven where the Divine Glory shines, comfort him in all the Troubles

Dum oculi mei ab illo Spectaculo cujus insatiabiles sunt, non abducantur, dum mihi lunam, solemq; intueri liceat, dum cæteris inharere Syderibus, & dum cum his sim, & Cœlestibus qua homini fas est miscere, dum animam ad cognitarum rerum conspectum tendentem in sublimi semper habeam, quantum refert mea quid calcem? Consol. ad Hier. c. 9.

Troubles of this World. Add further, That 'tis an excellent Preservative from Envy and Fretfulness at the Prosperity of the Wicked, to consider that their Felicity is as transient and vanishing as the Trouble of the Saints: *I have*
seen the Wicked in great Power, and
spreading himself like a green Bay
Tree: yet he pass'd away, and lo,
he was not: yea, I sought him,
and he could not be found. All the Riches, and Greatness, and Pleasures of the World are weighed, number'd, and measur'd by the *Psalmist*, and found to be as light and fading as Vanity. *Naked they came into the World, and naked they must go out;* and how much more tormenting will it be to be stript of all their Enjoyments; how much more sorrowful will they be to go from their great Possessions, than for one that leaves the World, and never had

had them? Their Hopes are like the giving up of the Ghost, and expire with their Breath for ever.

I went into the Sanctuary, saith Psalms. 73.

the troubled Saint, then understood

I their End: The End of their Felicity, and the Miseries of the Righteous. Besides the Evils suffer'd for Righteousness-sake, there are innumerable Sorrows that befall the Saints here. How many afflicting Diseases, sad Occurrences, vexing Passions harass them? Some Afflictions are so wounding to their Spirits, that no Balm that grows on Earth can heal. But the lively Hope of Heaven is an Universal Cure for all their Troubles. Let the mourning Christian consider the wise Providence of God, that orders all Events, and believe his Love in sending, and his End in all their Afflictions. Such is the Divine Power that God could immediately free us from all Trou-
bles,

bles, as easily, as turn the Wind from a blasting Quarter of the Heavens, to the most Benign and Refreshing. Are we pain'd with Diseases? he can more easily change the Tone of Nature in a sickly Body, and make it healthy; than one can change the stop in an Organ that presently alters the sound: but his Love dispenses bitter Things to us, that are necessary for our Spiritual and Everlasting Good. His End is to prepare us for Heaven, that is prepared for us. The Apostle declares, *He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God*: that is, made us fit for the Heavenly Glory. The Divine disposal of Things here to the Saints, has a certain Order to their Eternal State. He purgeth out our vicious guilty Affections to the World by sharp Physick, that our Hopes of Heaven may be more pure and vigorous, more
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actuated by serious Thoughts and intense Desires, that we may feel the sense of the *Psalmist's* Expression, *O when shall we come and appear before God!*

In short, Art thou in the Vale of Tears, languishing in Sorrow, and dying every Day? by Faith ascend to the *Mountains of Spices*, the Blessed Place Above, and thou wilt find the Comforts of God to revive and delight thy Soul.

7. Let this reconcile Death to us. The Pale Horse is sent to bring us to our Father's House. The Apostle expresses the true Christian Temper: *In this we* 2 Cor. 5. *groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our House that is from Heaven: And we are willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.* Every Saint in the present World is both a Prison and a Captive: his Soul

Soul is detain'd from the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, by confinement to his Body. Therefore methinks he should not merely be content to die out of the Necessity of Nature, when he can live no longer, but desire the happy removal, and say with the Psalmist, *I rejoic'd when they said to me, Let us go into the House of the Lord.* 'Tis true, Nature will recoil, and the extinguishing the present Life, with all its sensible pleasant Operations, is uneasy to us: but as when the Candles are put out, the Sun rises in its brightness, so when the Natural Life ceases, the Spiritual Life springs forth in its Oriency and Glory: *When the Earthly Tabernacle is dissolv'd, the naked separate Soul shall be received into a Building not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* Our joyful Affections, in leaving the World, and ascending

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ness as better than Life, more worth than all the World ; but the full revealing of his Love is only in Heaven. And as a Child knows by Experience the Love of his Father, but the Degrees and Strength of his Affection he does not understand till arrived at mature Age, and sees the Inheritance his Father enstates upon him. Thus in Heaven only the Saints shall know the excellent and perfect Love of God to them, when they are possess'd of that Glorious Kingdom, his most free and rich Gift, which transcends all their present Thoughts. And our blessed Redeemer, that by so many Titles has an Interest in us, that is not contented in his own Personal Glory, without our partaking of it, that by his Resurrection open'd the Grave, and by his Ascension open'd Heaven for us ; how dearly will he receive us ? He esteems
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Believers to *be his Joy and Crown*, and with an extasy of Affection will present them to his Father ; *Behold I, and the Children that God has given me.* The Angels and Saints Above overflow with Joy ; when the Soul, as a pure Spark freed from its Ashes, ascends to the Element of Spirits, how joyfully is it entertain'd by that Glorious Assembly ? The Angels that rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, will much more at the Glorification of a Saint ; and the Saints have a new accession to their Joy, upon the reception of any of their Brethren to that State of Felicity.

The Saints of all Ages may be resembled to a Fleet of Merchant-men that are bound for the same Port, some arrive sooner, others later, according to the time of their setting out : but those who arrive first, how do they welcome their Friends that

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come safely afterwards? An imperfect resemblance how dearly and joyfully the Saints that are gone before us welcome those who arrive in Heaven every day, knowing the dangerous Seas they have past through, where so many have been cast away and lost for ever. All Heaven is in Musick, celebrating the Praises of God, and expressing their joyful sense, when a Victorious Saint is come to receive his Reward. How does this Consideration upbraid us, that we are so unwilling to be dissolv'd, and to be with our best Friends in the best Place? that our Tears and Sorrows for leaving the Earthly Tabernacle, and the low Comforts of this Life, should continue till we come to the Gate of Heaven? How can we be content with the Imperfections of the present State? Here we are as distant from compleat
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Happiness, as the highest Heaven is from the Earth. Where is our Faith in the Promises of God? Where is our Love to our Redeemer and our Souls? The loathsomeness of a Sincere Christian to die, and be with Christ, is a deflection from his Christianity.

Lastly, This should refresh our Sorrows for the loss of our dearest Friends that die in the Lord. Here is a mournful parting, when they are laid in the cold, dark and silent Mansions of the Earth: when those whom we lov'd as our own Souls, are finally separated from us, and we shall see their Faces no more. And as one that is directed by the Light of a Torch in the Night, when 'tis taken away, is more sensible of the Darkness, than if he had not been. inlightned by it: So when those dear Friends are taken away, whose Conversation was the Light and Joy of our Lives,

Lives, we are more darkned with Sorrow, than if we had never injoy'd them. But if we duly consider Things, there is more reason of Joy, than Sorrow, at the departure of the Saints. Our Saviour tells his Disciples, that were mourning for his signifying that he must go away, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, because I say I must go to my Father to reign with him in Sovereign Glory.* Sincere Love will make us more to rejoyce in their Gain, than to grieve for our Loss. Especially considering within a little while we shall be inseparably united in the Kingdom of Glory, where Love reigns for ever.

FINIS.

Some Books lately Printed for Jonathan Robinson, at the Golden Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

A Second Volume of Sermons, on *Mat. 25. John 17. Rom. 6,* and 8th Chapters, &c. Preached by the late Reverend and Learned *Tho. Manton, D. D.* In two Parts.

The vanity of the World, with other Sermons. By *Ezekiel Hopkins*, now Lord Bishop of *London-Derry* in Ireland.

A *Paraphrase*, with Notes and a Preface, on the 6th of *St. John*, shewing that there is neither Good Reason, nor Sufficient Authority, to suppose that the *Eucharist* is discoursed of in that Chapter, much less to infer the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* from it.

Grotius his Arguments for the Truth of the Christian Religion, rendred into plain English Verse.

A Sermon on *1 John 5. 4.* [*This is the Victory over the World, even our Faith.*] Preached before the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, &c. *July 18. 1686.* By *James Fen, M. A.* and Vicar of *Gondhurst* in *Kent*.

A Discourse of *Bosom Sins.* A Sermon (on *Psal. 18. 23.*) Preach'd before the
Lord

Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, &c.
Octob. 10. 1686. By *Peter Newcome*, M.A.
and Vicar of *Alderham* in *Hertfordshire*.

The present State of the *Ottoman Empire* ; containing the Maxims of the Turkish Polity ; the most material Points of the Mahometan Religion ; their Military Discipline : With an exact computation of their Forces both by Sea and Land. By Sir *Paul Rycant* Knight.

A Compleat Journey through *Italy* ; Containing the Character of the People ; Description of the chief Towns, Churches, Monasteries, &c. By *R. Lassell* Gent.

The Great Evil of *Health-Drinking* ; or a Discourse wherein the Original, Evil, and Mischief of drinking of Healths are discovered and detected : With Remedies and Antidotes against it, in order to prevent the sad Consequents thereof.

The Best Fence against Popery ; or a Vindication of the Power of the King in Ecclesiastical Affairs, being an Answer to the Papiests Objections against the Oath of Supremacy, by a Learned Divine.

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